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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

CIA/RR GM 62-3
March 1962

ALBANIA



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

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Greeks constitute the largest of the minority groups of Albania. They live chiefly in the cities of Korçë and Gjirokastrë and in parts of southwestern Albania, but they are not uniformly distributed throughout the portion of Albania designated by the Greeks as "Northern Epirus." The 3,000 square miles that comprise "Northern Epirus" have been claimed by Greece ever since Albania became independent. Greek sources of the mid-1940's estimated that Greeks formed a majority of the population of the area, numbering around 120,000, a figure based on the total number who professed the Orthodox religion, regardless of whether they were Greek or Albanian in national sentiment. At the time of the Balkan Wars (1912-13), when Greek armed forces occupied "Northern Epirus," the majority of the Orthodox Albanians as well as those who considered themselves Greeks, might have preferred to be placed under Greek sovereignty, but with the passage of time the Orthodox Albanians have come to accept Albanian sovereignty. In 1945 Albanian sources placed the number of Greeks at slightly less than 35,000, which seems to have been a reasonable figure if Orthodox Albanians were excluded.

Reports regarding treatment of the Greek minority by the Hoxha government are conflicting. Several of the top leaders of the Albanian Workers (Communist) Party are of ethnic Greek background. Because of the death of trained Albanians, professional men from the Greek minority also have occupied positions of importance in the middle ranks of the bureaucracy and at the university and hospital in Tirana. Reportedly, some of these middle-ranking Greeks were purged in late 1960. It is said that Greeks continue to have their own schools and newspapers and all legal rights of Albanian citizens. Greek defectors have reported that Greeks live under oppressive conditions, but probably the Greek minority suffers no more from the harshness of the regime than does the Albanian majority.

Members of the Muslim Albanian community that formerly lived in northwestern Greece (Greek Epirus) are termed Cham. During and after World War II they were expelled from Greece (or left voluntarily, according to Greek sources) and now live in various parts of Albania. Estimates of their number vary from 12,000 to 25,000. They have not been assimilated into the native population, and most of them would probably prefer to return to Greece. Many other people from northern Greece also moved into Albania during the Greek civil war (1946-49). All but some 500 refugees, however, have been repatriated.

The small Slavic minority in Albania includes a Montenegrin settlement on the shore of Lake Scutari, scattered Serbian settlements along the eastern boundary, and a settlement near Lake Prespa, which is variously said to be Bulgarian or Macedonian.* Information about these groups is meager. Yugoslav officials claim that the Albanian Government is, in effect, trying to denationalize these groups by failing to provide schools using their own languages. In 1961, Slavic-speaking inhabitants of the northern border regions of Albania reportedly were being moved to Fier, in the middle coastal region. Such measures may well have been taken in connection with a general tightening of border security.

When the boundaries of Albania were delimited in the period 1913-35, sizable numbers of Albanians to the east and north were left outside the new country. They are concentrated in the Yugoslav Autonomous Region of Kosovo i Metohija (the Kosmet), where they comprise 65 percent of the total population and more than half of the population in 16 of the 18 former districts of the region. Albanians and Serbians have disputed the occupation of the Kosmet since the Middle Ages. During the period of the Balkan Wars and during World War II, Serbians slaughtered Albanians and vice versa, depending upon which group had the upper hand. Albanians form about 13 percent of the population in the Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia and are concentrated most heavily in the upper Vardar Valley. In the People's Republic of Croatia (Yugoslavia), they make up about 6 percent of the population and are concentrated near the Albanian border to the southwest and the northeast of Lake Scutari.

Within Yugoslavia the Albanians are one of the most underprivileged of the many nationality groups, and the regions in which they live are among the most underdeveloped in the country. The per capita income in the Kosmet in 1957 was less than half the national average. In parts of the Kosmet the Albanians inhabit the mountains, whereas the comparatively prosperous Serbs live on the more fertile

* In official Yugoslav terminology the Macedonian Slavs are treated as a distinct "Macedonian" nationality. Bulgaria considers them to be a subdivision of the Bulgarian nationality.

valley lands or in towns. The birth rate among the Albanians is higher than the average for Yugoslavia, and the number of peasants per unit of cultivated land in the Kosmet is the highest in the country. Albanians have migrated from the Kosmet to the more prosperous parts of Yugoslavia, where they are looked down upon and unwanted. In Belgrade, for example, they haul coal, handle garbage, and do other menial jobs that no one else wants to do. The Albanian in Yugoslavia is probably better off materially than his counterpart across the border, but in spite of this he tends to have a feeling of nostalgia for his ancestral homeland, a feeling that the Hoxha regime has not been slow to exploit.

The Yugoslav Government has made determined efforts to better the condition of the Albanian minority. The autonomous Kosmet Region was set up in recognition of the status of the Albanians as a nationality. Albanians have the legal rights of citizens, Albanian is recognized as an official language, a few elementary schools with Albanian-speaking teachers have been established, and several magazines and two daily newspapers are published in Albanian. Light industrial plants have been established in the Kosmet, the lignite reserves of the Kosovo Polje are beginning to be exploited, and more land is being put into cultivation. In effect, Yugoslavia is competing with Albania for the allegiance of the minority, and Albanian attempts to stir up discontent in the Kosmet have helped to stimulate Yugoslav programs to improve conditions there.

Resources and Economic Development

Albania, with Soviet and European Satellite assistance, has entered the early stages of industrialization, but it is still essentially an agricultural country even though it does not produce enough food for its rapidly increasing population. About 72 percent of the labor force is engaged in agriculture, yet because of mountainous terrain and poor drainage only about 15 percent of the total land area is classified as arable, and pasture and grassland account for only an additional 27 percent. The best agricultural land is on the coastal plain and in the Korçë Basin, where drainage and irrigation have increased and are continuing to increase the areas available for cultivation. Possibilities for increased crop production in the mountainous two-thirds of Albania, however, are limited. Consequently, Albania faces a real problem in its effort to attain self-sufficiency in food production -- a goal of the Third Five Year Plan (1961-65).

The per capita availability of food, about 2,000 calories per day, is the lowest in Europe, and the country is dependent on grain imports. The most important field crops are corn, wheat, other grains, cotton, tobacco, and sugar beets; and orchards and vineyards are important locally. Sheep, goats, and hogs have increased in numbers since the prewar period. Cotton, tobacco, and sugar beets -- the last mainly in the Korçë Basin -- provide a raw-materials base for the developing light industries of the country, and tobacco and cigarettes are among the more important export items.

The extractive industries of Albania, are, with some exceptions, of minor importance to the Sino-Soviet Bloc, but they are of considerable importance to the country itself, providing items for export and raw materials for domestic industries. Aside from Rumania, Albania is the only European Bloc country that produces a surplus of crude petroleum for export, but petroleum reserves are not thought to be large. Albanian production of chrome and iron-nickel ores contributes significantly to the total Sino-Soviet Bloc supply. The country produces about one-fifth of the Bloc supply of chrome and within the Bloc, is outranked in production only by the USSR. Chrome ore concentrates rank in value with tobacco and cigarettes among the most important exports of Albania. The somewhat limited reserves of chrome ore are estimated at between 3 billion and 6 billion tons. The mining of iron-nickel ore for its nickel content was started about 1955, and production reportedly amounted to 124,000 metric tons for the first half of 1961. A processing plant in Oroshonik was scheduled to absorb much of the Albanian output. Albanian reserves of iron-nickel ore are estimated at 20 million tons. Some copper is mined in Albania, and blister copper is produced in small quantities for export. The production of brown coal is almost sufficient for domestic requirements. Albanian sources claim that additional large deposits of copper, iron-nickel, and coal were discovered during 1961. Of the abundant construction materials, only asphalt (both natural and manufactured) is produced in quantities sufficient for export; Albania does not produce enough of the other construction materials to meet its own needs. The forests of the country provide lumber and fuelwood and also support small veneer and furniture industries.

The Communist regime has established or augmented a number of domestic light industries -- textiles, clothing, leather goods, food processing, ceramics, and glassware. The metalworking plants (only one of which is of substantial size) produce mainly simple agricultural equipment and spare parts, or service railroad rolling stock. Although the production of electric power in Albania is lower than in any other country in Europe, it has increased steadily during the past decade, and the country has a large hydroelectric potential.

A major obstacle to the industrialization of Albania is its primitive transportation. The rail system consists of a 124-kilometer standard-gauge railroad connecting Tirana and Elbasan with the port of Durres and a few short special-purpose narrow-gauge lines. Another standard-gauge line extending north from the existing system is under construction. The remainder of the country is dependent on roads or trails. The principal cities of the coastal plain are connected by fair to poor asphalt-surfaced roads, but most of the roads of the interior are gravel surfaced at best. The oil fields, which are on the coastal plain, have no fair road or rail connections, but most of the mineral, coal, and timber areas are in the interior, where equipment must be brought in and products taken out by truck over poor mountain roads. The few transborder roads into Yugoslavia and Greece carry very little or no traffic.

The extent of Albanian dependence on the USSR and the European Satellites for its industrial and agricultural development in recent years is reflected in its foreign trade. Imports from the Bloc countries have included industrial machinery, complete industrial plants, motor vehicles, locomotives and railroad rolling stock, coke, farm machinery, fertilizers, and grains. Exports have consisted of crude petroleum, asphalt, ores and metals, wood products, tobacco and cigarettes, processed foods, skins, fruits, and fabrics. In 1959 the USSR and the European Satellites supplied 93 percent of the imports by value and received 94.4 percent of the exports. Apparently economic relations with the European Satellites are continuing in spite of the break with Moscow.

Albania will continue to require outside economic assistance, whether from Communist China, the European Satellites, or elsewhere. It must continue to import bread grains if it is to maintain its economy at even the current low level. Over and above this, long-range plans to modernize the Albanian economy cannot be fulfilled without importing industrial and agricultural equipment. Albania must also have foreign financial backing and technical aid if it is to develop a modern economy.

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Project No. 63. 1964

	<u>Analyst</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Coordinator</u>	<u>Clerical</u>
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Ms. Lagoudakis
HR, Dept. of State
Rm. 7829

AM 12-3 Albania

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22 November 61

I discussed the proposed GM on Albania with [REDACTED] who handles the area in ONE. He thinks that such a presentation will be very useful. He thinks that Albania will continue to be somewhat "warm" and problematical for some time to come. I told him about the headings we intended to discuss, as given in the outline, particularly the part about relationships with neighboring countries. He thought that if we could present something on the minorities this would be especially useful. He brought up the points that there is some question whether there really is a Greek minority in Northern Epirus, and that Hoxha is still stirring the pot about self-determination for the Albanians in Yugo. In short, we get good support from him.

Note that the project proposal does not suggest that estimative facets be discussed per se. These are mentioned in the proposal ^{as} a reason for putting out a GM on Albania. The GM would be concerned with the geographic facets of the political situation, not the situation itself. It was in these terms that I talked to [REDACTED]

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Geography Division, ORR

Project Initiation Memorandum

14 November 1961

Project No. 63.1964

1. Subject of Proposed Project: Albania
2. Statement of Problem: The down-grading of Albania as a member of the Communist Bloc by Khrushchev and Albania's defense by Communist China brings the future of that country into question. Will the Hoxha regime be able to maintain itself in the face of Soviet opposition but with Chicom assistance? If a regime more favorable to Moscow should be established, what effect would this have on Albania's relations with Yugoslavia, Greece, and the West? If the lid should be blown off completely and a non-Communist government established, what effect would this have on relations with Albania's neighbors and the West? It is proposed to publish a Geographic Intelligence Memorandum that would examine the geographic background of these questions. It would not be a catalogue of geographic factors, but would deal with the factors pertinent to an exploration of Albania's relationships with its neighbors, members of the Bloc, and the West. The subjects covered would include:
 - a. Albania's present economic development as it relates to dependence on or independence of the Bloc and different Bloc countries.
 - b. Factors contributing to internal instability:
 - 1.) Present degree of national consciousness as opposed to local and family loyalties.
 - 2.) Possible rivalry between Gags and Tosks (north vs. south).
 - 3.) Religion as a factor of instability: Moslems, Orthodox, Roman Catholic; varying degrees of opposition to Communist regime by these groups.
 - 4.) Low state of economic development -- problems of transportation, terrain, resources, land distribution, etc.
 - c. Relationships with neighboring countries:
 - 1.) Transportation links with Yugoslavia and Greece.
 - 2.) Albanian minority in Yugoslavia and vice versa.
 - 3.) Greek claim to Northern Epirus.
 - 4.) Greek minority in Albania and vice versa.
 - 5.) Italian and other Western interests.
3. Requester: Self-initiated.
4. Responsible Analyst, Branch: [REDACTED] D/GG/E.

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OK 039
15 NOV 1961

Project No. 63.1964

-2-

5. Kind and Extent of Cooperation Desired From:

- a. D/GG: Maps to illustrate Albania's relationships with the Bloc and its neighbors, terrain, transportation, economic activity, ethnic and religious groups, Greek claim to N. Epirus, population distribution (if possible). Probably would require one central map and about four insets.
- b. Other Parts of CIA: Information coordination with the Economic Area and OGI.

6. Estimated Man Hours in D/GG: 100

7. Probable Completion Date: 15 January 1962.

8. Probable Form of Final Publication: CIA/RR OM

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Chief, Geography Division

Approved:

Chief, Geographic Research

Assistant Director, JORR

15 Nov 61
Date

24 Nov 61
Date

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